2975 Laurel Street #20
San Diego, California 92104
October 16, 1985

Ben Sasway
c/o Ted Bumer
1168 Union Street
San Diego, California 92101

Dear Mr. Sasway,

Since your name and struggle first became a part of the news I've admired you and the strength of your convictions. I know that it takes a great deal more courage to resist the military than to participate in it, especially during the current wave of militarism in the U.S. As a student at San Diego State University in recent years, I had an opportunity to sample some student opinion regarding your resistance (if letters to the Daily Aztec and restroom graffiti are any indication). I was appalled, not only at the overwhelming opposition to your stand, but by the visciousness of it. So I would imagine that you've personally taken a great deal of abuse.

My experiences as a hospital corpsman with the marines in Viet Nam convinced me of the horrors and futility of war. I made a vow at that time that I would never support another armed conflict regardless of the stakes or "justification". I naively believed that Americans had learned something of lasting value. But since those years, it has been very disheartening to see how easily Reagan stampeded Americans back to supporting a militaristic foreign policy.

You and I know that humanity will never find peace by building awesome military power. Peace will come when each of us finds the courage to refuse to be a part of violence and the institutions that support violence. You, Ben, have demonstrated that courage at a time when the peace movement seems to be in a shambles, or, at best, ineffective. And that is why you seem all the more remarkable to me.

I know nothing of you personally, but I am sure that your refusal to register for the draft was not motivated by fear of combat but rather by a commitment to a better world. Please know that the world is a better place because of what you have done. Your actions have given new hope to many of us, and will continue to have a positive impact in ways that you can't imagine now. I would like to some day shake your hand or give you a hug. 'Til then, these words will have to do.

Yours in struggle,

R. "Jess" Jessop